

(b) whether it is also a fact that the seeds of the above crops are not available throughout the country;

(c) if so, the efforts being made by Government to make agriculture profitable; and

(d) the details of the efforts being made by Government to encourage bio-farming and the details of the achievements made in this regard, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Bt. Cotton is the only Genetically Modified (GM) crop that has been released for commercial cultivation in the country. The area under Bt. Cotton has increased from 29,000 hectare in Kharif, 2002 to 12.34 lakh hectare in Kharif, 2005, which reflects the acceptability of Bt. Cotton among the farmers. No other GM crop has been released for commercial cultivation.

(b) Bt. Cotton seeds are produced and marketed by private seed companies. According to the information available 38,700 quintals of Bt. cotton seeds have been sold in the country during Kharif, 2006.

(c) For enhancing farm profitability through crop improvement and management, use of Biotechnology and hybrid technology has been promoted through specific projects on aspects such as hybrid technology, development of transgenics and genomics.

(d) There is no scheme on bio-farming. However, a pilot project for production, promotion and market development of organic farming in the country is under implementation.

Death of leopard in Pulwama

***68. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:** Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a leopard strayed in Pulwama District of J&K on 17th January, 2007 was first injured by bullet shot of Police and later stoned to death by mob in the presence of Wild life personnel;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons why the leopard could not be rescued and restored to jungle; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken to ensure safety of wild animals?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA):

(a) and (b) As per the information received from the State Government of Jammu & Kashmir, a leopard strayed into the Cheki-Chhoti Pora Village, Shopian, Pulwama District and took shelter in a pine tree on 17-01-2007. The field staff of the Forest Department and the Wildlife Protection staff from Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary reached the spot immediately. In the mean time, a large number of people had already gathered on the spot. Police personnel were also called in as the field staff alone could not control the mob. Due to persisted shouting of the mob, the leopard finally jumped off the tree and injured two persons among the mob. The angry mob then chased the animal and killed it with lathies and stones. As per the postmortem report, the animal had 'died due to head injury and excessive bleeding through nostrils and mouth'. There was no bullet mark on the body of the said leopard.

(c) Due to the recent man eating incidents involving leopards in the state, the people in the region were already in the grip of fear psychosis. As a result, the mob that had gathered on the spot became wild, and the Police, even after resorting to tear-gas, could not control it. This hampered the efforts of the forest and wildlife staff to rescue the animal.

(d) The Government of India under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes such as 'Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries', 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant' provides technical and financial assistance to the States for effective protection and conservation of wildlife. The various activities for which assistance is provided include developing better communication facilities, infrastructure development, habitat improvement, compensation to wildlife victims, veterinary care, education and awareness etc.

In addition, the Jammu & Kashmir Government has also taken the following steps to ensure the safety of wild animals:

1. Setting up of control rooms at Divisional levels to attend to the problem of human wildlife conflict.

2. Massive awareness campaign for the masses through print and electronic media.
3. Visits of Wildlife personnel to the conflict prone villages for educating the locals regarding preventive measures to be adopted.
4. Setting up of village level committees for creating awareness.

Office buildings for Railway undertakings

†*69. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that most of the undertakings under his Ministry do not have their own office buildings and they are operating from rented buildings;

(b) if so, the reasons for not constructing buildings for those undertakings;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the said undertakings are paying crores of rupees as rent every year in the absence of buildings for them; and

(d) if so, by when buildings would be constructed for such undertakings?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

There are 9 Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) under the administrative control of Ministry of Railways namely:

- (i) IRCON International Limited (IRCON),
- (ii) RITES Limited (RITES),
- (iii) Indian Railway Finance Corporation Limited (IRFC),
- (iv) Container Corporation of India Ltd. (CONCOR),
- (v) Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL),
- (vi) Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation Limited (MRVC),
- (vii) Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC),
- (viii) Railtel Corporation of India Ltd. (RCIL), and
- (ix) Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd. (RVNL).

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.